



PICTURES FROM AN EXPEDITION

*Ile de Pâques 1934-1935.**Expedition Métraux-Lavachery, 1995*

ISBN: 2-930157-00-3. Hardback, 95 pages

950 Belgian Francs (approx. \$26).

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Review by Paul G. Bahn

These are exhilarating times for bibliophile Rapanuiphiles—good books seem to be coming out in ever greater numbers, for example the series of volumes from the Easter Island Foundation, or the recent double-treat from Steven Fischer (see above) or this little gem from Belgium which has just come my way, and which seems virtually unknown outside its country of origin.

As everyone is aware, the famous Franco-Belgium expedition of the 1930s took Alfred Métraux and Henri Lavachery to Easter Island from 28 July 1934 to 3 January 1935, and resulted in an academic monograph and a more popular book from each of them. What few have realized till now is that they also brought back numerous photographs, most of which were never published, but which have been kept by institutions or the families of those involved. At the close of the expedition, a film was also shot on the island by a Dutch cameraman, John Fernhout, and some stills from it are also included here.

The first part of this fine book (pp. 9-34) comprises a fascinating text by Thomas Lavachery, grandson of Henri, who has had access to the archives of his father Jean. This text provides a full and vivid account of the expedition, including what the two men did on the island, and their various dealings with the islanders.

Henri Lavachery had published a book on unemployment in England (sic) and one on the Precolumbian collections of Madrid's Archaeological Museum. His desire to go to Easter Island had been fired by Guillaume de Hevesy's claims of a link between *rongorongo* and the Indus script, although Métraux soon persuaded him that such a link was a mirage. It is interesting to learn that on his way to meet Métraux in Callao, Lavachery visited Cuzco (7-9 July 1934) and declared that its Inka stonework was "very different from what one can find on Easter Island." The two men were joined by Drapkin, a Chilean sent by his government to study leprosy on the island (which then afflicted 20 people, about 5% of the population), as well as to make a demographic study and collect natural history specimens.

They reached the island on a rainy, depressing day, which immediately helped arouse in them a very negative reaction to the islanders. Various discomforts were endured—not just bad weather (which was also to hamper Fernhout's filming) but also nights filled with mosquitoes and the meowing of feral cats in the caves. Juan Tepano, Routledge's main informant, was engaged as a guide, and his wife as cook. Having written down all the stores Tepano could tell him, Métraux would entertain him and other islanders at night with tales from the "Odyssey," to which he gave a Polynesian flavor.

By the end of their stay, Lavachery had grown very enthusiastic, but Métraux was somewhat depressed and still not too fond of islanders. When the *Mercator*, a training ship, arrived in December to pick them up, they transferred a statue, a statue-head and a *pukao* to its decks, with great difficulties which were recorded by Fernhout's movie camera. His film, which lasts 22 minutes, has a commentary by Lavachery, and includes footage of the island's unfortunate lepers.

The second part of the book is an album of 58 black/white plates, the best of what survives from the expedition—many have been damaged or have faded, and even some of those published here have had to be enhanced by modern laboratory methods. All negatives are now lost. Only a few pictures of the expedition members are included. There are rather more of the island and its monuments and statues, but Rapanuiphiles will probably derive most interest and enjoyment from some remarkable photos and portraits of the islanders, including some well-known characters from that period.

According to his grandson, Lavachery had intended to write a general book on Easter Island archaeology, despite his mistaken view that there were no deep excavations to be done, since everything was on or near the surface. In a way, it may be just as well that he made this mistake, as he had never done any excavating before his visit to the island, and did not find much when he tried (the task of excavation had originally been assigned to Louis-Charles Watelin, a renowned French archaeologist who was traveling to the island with Métraux but who died before reaching Peru). Lavachery contacted a publisher but the archaeology book never materialized, for reasons unknown. However, it seems that in 1963 he did write an adventure novel, "*Herbe Jaune*" (Yellow Grass) which takes place on Easter Island. This remains unpublished, but the manuscript is in the possession of his son Jean, so perhaps it will be published one day. In the meantime, we have this marvelous souvenir-album of that pioneering expedition which accomplished so much. It deserves a place on the bookshelf of everyone interested in the island.

[Editor's note: we made an unsuccessful inquiry to the publisher. However, the bookstore at the *Musees royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Parc du Cinquantenaire 10, 1000 Bruxelles* did respond (fax: 02/733-7735; phone: 02/741-7428). The book can be ordered through them and costs US \$37 (\$1,370 FB) including postage to the USA.]

ROUTLEDGE REPRINT!

We have received word that Katherine Routledge's *The Mystery of Easter Island* has been reprinted by Adventures Unlimited Press, PO Box 74, Kempton IL 60946. Phone (815) 253-6390, credit card orders accepted via telephone. The price for this paperback reprint is \$16.95. They can be reached via email at <auphq@frontiernet.net> or the book can be ordered on the web from Amazon.

EASTER ISLAND FOUNDATION NEWS

The Municipality of Viña del Mar is seriously considering constructing a large municipal building in the block in which are located the William Mulloy Library, the Museo Fonck and the Centro Cultural. Rumors are flying, but it is a definite possibil-

ity that the Fonck Museum, housed in a handsome old, once-private home, may be torn down and replaced by a glass-and-aluminum structure. It is believed that the city's mayor, Rodrigo Gonzalez, has only twice set foot in the Museum, once during a cocktail party inaugurating an exhibition of Peruvian antiquities. He has, however, given assurances (no promises!) that if the current Museum building is demolished, the Fonck will be given new and maybe even enlarged space in the new, modern edifice. An earlier suggestion, that the Museum be moved to the "Quinta Vergara," a park-like area located on the other side of the city center, has apparently been nixed. Part of the reason is the expense (and risk) involved in moving the authentic Rapa Nui *moai* that stands in the front yard, and the inaccessibility to the park area for tour buses. Museum officials as well as some of the people living in the neighborhood, are fighting the proposed demolition and "modernization."

BOOKS FOR SALE!

The Easter Island Foundation's first used book sale fundraiser has been successful and we would like to expand it with the help of our many Rapanuiphile friends. If you have duplicate books, or ones that you no longer deem essential to your Easter Island library, donate them to the Easter Island Foundation. We will acknowledge your gift with a receipt for the current wholesale value (1/2 the retail value.) In most cases this will be more than you originally paid, so you will gain a nice tax deduction along with some shelf space, and your book will find a loving new home. The Mulloy Library will of course have first right of refusal before any books are offered for general sale.

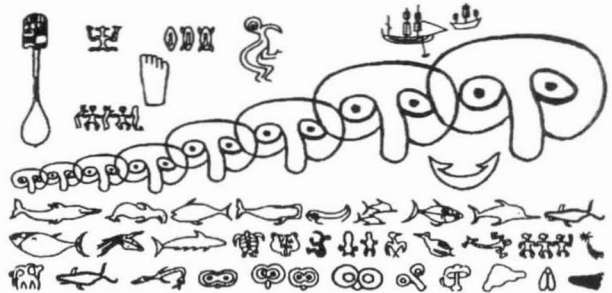
The EIF still has some of the books advertised in our last issue. Many of these are rare and valuable; others are out of print, and certain ones may be of interest to general Polynesian studies. All proceeds benefit the Easter Island Foundation. If you are interested in any of the following, please contact us via fax: (805) 534-9301, mail, or email: rapanui@compuserve.com

- Item 4. Chauvet, Stephen. 1935. *L'Ile de Paques et ses Mysteres*. Editions TEL, Paris. In French, oversize. Paper cover. Spine slightly frayed, but otherwise very good. \$400.00
- Item 5. Delano, Amasa. 1970. *Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres*. Gregg Reprint, N.J. Hard cover, very good. \$25.00
- Item 7. de Roquefeuil, Camille. 1981. *A Voyage Around the World 1816-1819, and Trading for Sea Otter Fur on the Northwest Coast of America*. Ye Galleon Press, Washington. Hard cover, dust jacket, like new. \$20.00
- Item 8. Englert, P. Sebastian. 1948. *La Tierra de Hotu Matu'a. Historia, Etnologica y Lengua de la Isla de Pascua*. Imprenta y editorial 'San Francisco', Padre Las Casas, Chile. First Edition. Hard cover. Cover slightly worn, some foxing on edges of pages. The insert map in the back is a hand-traced copy of Englert's original map showing places on the island. Later editions have a machine printed map. \$200.00
- Item 12. Golovnin, V.M. 1979. *Around the World on the Kamchatka 1817-1819*. Translated by E.L. Wiswell. The Hawaiian Historical Society and the University Press of Hawaii. Reprint. Hard cover, dust jacket. Like new. \$20.00.
- Item 15. Howay, Frederick W., ed. 1941. *Voyages of the Columbia to the Northwest Coast 1787-1790 and 1790-1793*. Da Capo Press,

- NY, Reprint, 1969. Hard cover, excellent. \$75.00
- Item 16. Hort, Dora. 1969. *Tahiti: The Garden of the Pacific*. Praeger, New York. Hard cover, excellent condition. \$20.00
- Item 17. Ingraham, Joseph. 1971. *Journal of the Brigantine Hope on a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of North America 1790-92*. Imprint Society, MA. Hard cover, very good. \$60.00
- Item 22. Morrell, Abby Jane. 1833. *Narrative of a Voyage to the Ethiopic and South Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Chinese Sea North and South Pacific Ocean in the years 1829, 1830, 1831*. Gregg Reprint, 1970. Hard cover, excellent. \$20.00
- Item 23. Mulloy, William and Gonzalo Figueroa. 1978. *The A Kivi-Vai Teka Complex and its Relationship to Easter Island Architectural Prehistory*. Asian and Pacific Archaeology Series, #8. University of Hawaii. Paper cover; new. \$20.00
- Item 24. Noah, William. 1978. *Voyage to Sydney in the Hillsborough 1798-1799*. . . . Sydney, Library of Australian History (limited edition). Hard cover. Like new. \$10.00
- Item 26. Picker, Fred. *Rapa Nui*. With historical summary by Thor Heyerdahl. Paddington Press, N.Y. Hard cover, like new. \$30.00
- Item 29. Reynolds, Stephen. 1970. *The Voyage of the New Hazard to the Northwest Coast, Hawaii and China 1810-1813*. Ye Galleon Press, Washington. Hard cover, very good. \$20.00
- Item 34. Ward, G. (ed). *American Activities in the Central Pacific 1790-1870*. 8 vols. Hard cover, excellent. \$250.00

Rapanui Dingbat Font

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Rapanui Dingbats created by Alan Drake. Thanks, Alan!

PUBLICATIONS

- BELLWOOD, PETER. 1997. *Prehistory of the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago*. Revised Edition. University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu.
- BIBLIOGRAPHIE DE L'ILE DE PÂQUES is published by La Société des Océanistes, Nr. 46, Paris, 1997. The bibliography contains 223 pages and 4422 titles. Price is 300 French Francs, plus postage and handling. Order from the editor: Société des Océanistes, Musée de l'Homme. Esplanade du Trocadéro. 75116, Paris,